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19 FEB 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

FROM :   
Director of Central Reference

SUBJECT : Reduced Biographic Reporting from FBIS

REFERENCE : Your Memorandum of 4 February 1982, Same Subject

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*John:*

1. The referent noted that FBIS was compelled to reduce the level of funding for the biographic reporting program conducted for OCR and that, consequently, publications would be sent to JPRS contract personnel on a bimonthly rather than monthly basis. This action was undertaken without any prior consultation with OCR and represents, for us, an unsatisfactory option--one that will damage our capability to perform our biographic mission. Given the past close cooperation between the two offices on a variety of programs, such action is hard to understand.

2. The JPRS biographic reporting program supports OCR in its community role, under DCID 1/9, to produce intelligence and to respond to requests on foreign personalities. The JPRS biographic reporting program provides basic data on officials in denied areas and supports the production of the highly useful directories of foreign officials, which are disseminated in more than 1200 copies at each issuance. As input to our biographic files, which we maintain for the community, the take from the biographic reporting program assists OCR and community analysts in:

- identifying changes in denied area governments;
- signaling shifts in status among the leadership;
- providing indicators to sensitive matters that are tightly held by Bloc governments (e.g., leadership illness, responsibility for classified programs); and
- identifying regional leaders who will be the national leaders of the future.

3. The value of the JPRS biographic reporting program can probably best be seen in the context of an issue currently important to US policymakers. Such an issue is Poland. Over the years OCR has collected in its Polish biographic files much of the information provided by the JPRS biographic reporting program. This information has become the community's data base on career patterns of Polish leaders. In the recent and ongoing turmoil in Poland, OCR's ability to

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accurately and comprehensively reconstruct the career patterns of Polish officials has been instrumental in enabling political analysts throughout the Agency and community to interpret the significance of personnel changes in that country. Any past gaps in such information on Polish officials would have seriously hampered this analytical effort, and any future interruption and loss of such data for the denied areas would hamstring this Agency's capability to provide policymakers with sound political analysis on any future "Polands."

4. The cut-back in the JPRS biographic reporting program, by establishing a mechanism that destroys the continuity in exploitation of sources, damages the credibility of OCR's biographic data base. The FBIS action is capricious: to cut exploitation every other month, without any regard to forthcoming events in these countries, is procrustean folly for an intelligence organization. In addition, the FBIS action is contrary to various Community on-going initiatives such as:

- the community interest in expanding the exploitation of open source materials, as expressed by such bodies as STIC; and
- the challenge, as expressed in the Intelligence Capabilities '85 study, to construct and maintain a solid base of analysis and information on all countries of potential interest to the US.

5. FBIS' action in curtailing the biographic reporting program seriously damages this Office's capability to perform its basic biographic mission. Consequently, I ask that you reconsider by reinstating the program to one of continual (month by month) exploitation of FBIS/OCR agreed upon sources. If this approach is not possible, I suggest that we sit down to discuss other options that may assist you on your budget problems. This is the practice that OCR has used with FBIS in the past when it has had to curtail foreign publication collection because of cuts in the OCR budget.



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